

Facts

The average meth lab produces five to seven pounds of *toxic waste* for every pound of methamphetamine produced. This waste is usually disposed of by simply dumping the waste near the laboratory. This can cause contamination of the soil and any nearby water supplies.

Law enforcement personnel responding to meth labs must be specially trained and wear protective equipment. The North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation's Clandestine Laboratory Response Team is equipped with special chemical suits. The material in these type of suits provide a protective barrier from acids, bases, and solvents. They also wear air purifying respirators to avoid inhalation hazards.



Signs of a Meth Lab

The following items *may indicate* the presence of a clandestine laboratory:

- Unusual odors such as ether, ammonia, or acetone.
- Large volume of trash, especially chemical containers, rolls of duct tape, coffee filters.
- The curtains are always closed or the windows are covered with blankets or aluminum foil. This includes garages, sheds or other building structures.
- Frequent visitors, especially at unusual hours.
- Evidence of chemical waste or dumping.
- Extensive security or privacy measures (no trespassing signs, beware of dog signs, fences, large trees.)

*If you suspect a methamphetamine lab, contact your local law enforcement agency immediately. **Do not** attempt to "investigate" or confront the occupants yourself.*

Methamphetamine

What's the Danger?



presented by the

**Attorney General
Roy Cooper**

and the

**North Carolina
State Bureau of Investigation**

*What you should know
about Methamphetamine.*

What is “Meth”?

Methamphetamine is also known as “meth,” “poor man’s cocaine,” “speed,” “crank,” “crystal,” or “ice” and is an addictive and very powerful central nervous system stimulant. This drug can be snorted, smoked, injected or taken by mouth.

Users of meth experience increased heart rate, increased blood pressure, elevated temperature, and are able to go long periods without sleep. Tolerance to the drug occurs rapidly, often leading to addiction in a relatively short time.

Meth is being used by all age groups, lifestyles, and in all areas of the country. Users are attracted to the drug’s reputation for increasing energy levels, sexuality, and an easy way to lose weight.



Methamphetamine is shown in the rock-like form (left). It can also be in a powder

or crystal form (right). The color varies from white, yellow, brown, gray, orange, and pink.



What are the Risks?

Meth is produced in clandestine laboratories. It is easily cooked using common household chemicals, along with over the counter cold or asthma medicine. The “recipe” requires very little training, a limited amount of equipment, and inexpensive chemicals.

Clandestine labs are illegal. “Clandestine” means concealed, masked, disguised, hidden, undercover, underground, secret, or incognito. These clandestine labs produce meth almost anywhere. Common locations include neighborhood homes, vehicles, rental storage units, and motel rooms.

Clandestine labs are extremely dangerous. Many of the chemicals found in the labs are corrosive and/or flammable. The vapors developed during the “cooking” process of the chemicals attack mucous membranes, skin, eyes, and the respiratory tract. Some of the chemicals used can react with water or other chemicals and explode or cause a fire.

Often times innocent children are living in the homes where methamphetamine is being manufactured. The children are exposed to the hazardous chemicals, drug residue, and deadly gases. Babies crawl on carpet where toxic chemicals have spilled.

Additional Risks

In addition to the chemical and environmental hazards, law enforcement personnel must be aware of other dangers such as “booby traps,” armed suspects, suspects under the influence of illegal drugs, explosive devices, electrical devices, and animals.



These are typical clandestine laboratory “kitchens.”



Methamphetamine labs are on the rise in North Carolina. The North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation responded to 34 labs in 2001; 98 labs in 2002; 177 labs in 2003; and as of May 5, 2004, there have been 113 responses. To read Attorney General Roy Cooper’s latest methamphetamine report go to www.ncdoj.com.